



## Freeman Teacher of the Year Named Finalist



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

Mrs. Hunnicutt enjoys the Student Art Show in the Library.

Livi Justis  
Staff Writer

In the very center of Wiley Hunnicutt's desk sits the figurine of a wizard that once belonged to her father. After earning her National Board Certification this past fall, the ornament that once decorated her father's desk, was given to Mrs. Hunnicutt by her mother. The word "professor" inscribed at the bottom of this

statuette is a reminder of her father who, "influenced me because he demonstrated how important it is to have a positive influence on the students inside and outside of the classroom," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

Each year, Freeman recognizes an outstanding member of the teaching staff as Teacher of the Year and this year Mrs. Hunnicutt, English and creative writing teacher earned the title. Mrs. Hunnicutt is also now the Tuckahoe District representative for the HCPS Teacher of the

Year Contest.

Prior to joining the Freeman family, Mrs. Hunnicutt taught English for 11 years on the middle school level at Harry F. Byrd middle school.

"I have had the privilege of working with Mrs. Hunnicutt now at two different buildings, both at Byrd and here at Freeman. She has a special gift for working with all types of students and all kinds of learners," said Anne Poates, principal.

"I came to Freeman because I wanted to shake things up and gain a new perspective," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

What sets Mrs. Hunnicutt apart from most teachers is the variety of different classes that she teaches. Mrs. Hunnicutt teaches ninth grade English collaboratively with Toni Rennie, exceptional education teacher as well as tenth grade Leadership English classes, and creative writing.

"She really knows her stuff, she is a no-nonsense teacher... firm but kind," said Mrs. Rennie.

Over the course of their four years teaching together, Mrs. Hunnicutt has "never hesitated to stop and help struggling students while still holding them to a high standard," said Mrs. Rennie.

"If I have to redirect a student, I tend to do it quietly," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

Throughout the school year, Mrs. Hunnicutt expects to see growth in her students' writing as a result of the high standards she has set for them. In her creative

writing class, Mrs. Hunnicutt asks her students to dedicate 15 minutes of their time nightly to writing.

"She makes us write for fifteen minutes for homework and she asks us to be diligent about writing. She also asks us to go up in front of the class and share our writing and critique each other, which helps us with editing," said junior Tiya Booker.

Going beyond the creative writing curriculum, Mrs. Hunnicutt also teaches her students leadership, personal responsibility, and self-discipline. The passion that she puts into her teaching is reflected in her students gain.

"She's really concerned about everyone and genuinely interested. She's a sensitive person, and if she sees you're having a bad day, she asks you what's wrong," said Tiya.

Extending beyond her passion for teaching, Mrs. Hunnicutt is dedicated to creating a teaching environment that is inviting to all students.

"We admire her because she's an easy person to talk to," said Tiya.

For the average teacher, balancing three different courses would be a daunting challenge.

"I have to be able to shift gears... over the years I have become more adept at that," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

Mrs. Hunnicutt has a unique approach to teaching.

"I'm not afraid to get silly or dramatic!" said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

"She is all about diversity

and accepting everyone, that's what makes her unique. But she helps her students with their writing and pushes them to get better, that's what makes her exceptional," said junior Austy Wood.

But even the greats face challenges along the way. "My biggest challenge has been effectively teaching struggling students to read and think critically," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

In order to combat these challenges, Mrs. Hunnicutt "is open to all kinds of new techniques."

Despite the variety of courses that Mrs. Hunnicutt teaches, there is one lesson that she would like to leave with all of her students.

"Don't be afraid to take risks... I want kids to want to come in here and I want them to feel safe because if they don't feel safe, they won't feel comfortable taking risks," said Mrs. Hunnicutt.

Before coming to Freeman, Mrs. Hunnicutt followed her own advice and took the risk of leaving Byrd Middle School after 11 years of instruction. While in the midst of adjusting to the Freeman atmosphere, Mrs. Hunnicutt took another risk and went on to earn her National Board Certification. As she advises, sometimes taking small risks can result in big accomplishments. It is these risks that Mrs. Hunnicutt takes both inside and outside of the classroom that make her Teacher of the Year.

## Chorus Teacher Earns Henrico County Honors

Shannon McCarthy  
A&E Editor

Harmonies flutter through the air. Changing tempos, volumes, and pitches create scenes through utilizing only one instrument—the human voice, and one person is responsible for all of that music: Amy Hruska.

Mrs. Hruska, Freeman's Choral teacher, was recently honored for her work with the choral departments by winning the Henrico County Music Teacher of the Year Award. To be eligible for the award, music teachers must have taught in Henrico County for at least three years. The award is voted on by each music teacher in the county, approximately 60, and the person with the highest number of votes wins.

"Since it was voted on by my peers who are just as deserving as me, it's amazing," Mrs. Hruska said. "I feel like all the music teachers in the county are just exceptional. I am quite honored that they would vote for me."

Rick Tinsely, the music specialist for the entire county, surprised Mrs. Hruska with a dozen red roses during her sixth

period class; Mrs. Poates and Mr. Massa were also there to congratulate Mrs. Hruska.

"They were so supportive and thrilled for me," Mrs. Hruska said. "The students in Girls were like 'Way to go Mrs. Hruska!'"

Both students and parents have congratulated Mrs. Hruska. The school's chief meteorologist, Malcom Taylor, made a video for celebrating Mrs. Hruska's win for the morning announcements. Parents have sent emails "complimenting" her "on the award" and saying much they thought she deserved it.

However, the most telling support comes from the other teachers. Elementary school music teachers, with whom Mrs. Hruska has very little contact, emailed with messages such as "I voted for you!"

"It was really an honor and it was just as amazing to me that they can be so giving when they were just as deserving," Mrs. Hruska said. "But that's just how music people are."

This award comes after years of hard work and dedication. After working a job as a secretary, Mrs. Hruska decided to use her performance degree to teach students. The students made her laugh and she loved to hear them sing. She said the experience

made her wonder why she had not gone into teaching before.

Her love of singing and teaching has permeated the choral department at Freeman. Junior Lauren Fraites describes Harmony in Motion, Freeman's Show Choir, "like a family."

Emulating the influence of her high school music teacher—later turned mentor then friend—Mrs. Hruska tries to have "fun with music" like her teacher did when she was younger.

Mrs. Hruska's influence can be felt throughout the choral department—not through fun, but also through elevating the craft.

"Mrs. Hruska has influenced me...by teaching me how to mature the overall quality in my tone," Lauren said. Mrs. Hruska also teaches "pieces every musician should have in their repertoire" such as the Hallelujah Chorus.

The students are not the only people being influenced, Mrs. Hruska is also influenced by them. For example, two students from India last year picked a piece for the choral department to sing and helped with pronunciation to cultural lessons. Mrs. Hruska said she "wouldn't have thought" to sing many pieces that students



PHOTO: TEDDY SCHERER

Mrs. Hruska plays the piano in front of her chorus class.

suggest.

Mrs. Hruska's job varies from teaching different styles of music, teaching parts and musicality of pieces (the dynamics, the interpretation, etc.) to conducting to planning spring trip to completing paper work for competitions to fundraising to transportation to concert planning and much more. Even with this busy schedule, Mrs. Hruska finds time to learn each and every day.

"I never stop learning. I want to

keep learning different pieces of music, I want to learn different instruments," Mrs. Hruska said.

Mrs. Hruska will receive her award at the School Board meeting on Mar. 26, 2015. There she will be presented with a plaque as they read out her biography and qualifications.

"I hate to say I'm not worthy, but I just thought that all of the music teachers are just as deserving. I feel like everyone should get the award," she said.

## 'We The People' Team to Attend National Competition in D.C.

Ashley Frederick  
Staff Writer

Sports teams are not the only ones going to a national competition this year. Freeman's We the People team will compete at the national competition on April 24th and 25th at George Mason University. Although the team did not win the state competition, it was chosen as a wild card.

"Each state sends a state champion and the committee that sets up the tournament chooses five wild cards from around the country. It just means we are one of five not-state champions that gets to participate," said Rob Peck, AP government teacher.

According to Mr. Peck,

preparation for the competition requires that the students become poised experts.

"The students are divided into six units, and each unit receives three questions that they research and prepare opening statements on. They present them in a simulation of a congressional hearing and they do a question and answer session without notes," said Mr. Peck.

Senior Carson Whitehurst relies on intensive research to contribute to his team and believes that it is truly a collaborative effort.

"Knowing important cases and how they relate to your question is important. We've relied a lot on federalist and antifederalist papers to get the founders' perspectives, and modern analysis from anyone in

the field," said Carson.

Another factor contributing to preparation is funding. The cost of the competition is roughly \$1200 per person.

"We raised money through family, family friends, foundations, the Henrico education system, and some online fundraising. I was astonished at how quickly the money was raised. Within a month, we raised \$33,000," said Mr. Peck.

The team was also supported by HCPS, the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, and the Henrico Education Foundation.

Freeman's team expects to face tough competition including consistent national winners from California, Oregon, Colorado, and Alabama.

"There are a handful of teams

that are always in the top ten nationally. Maggie Walker is one of them. In 15 years in the national competition, they've never finished outside of the top ten nationwide and they've won twice. There's a few teams that are the national powerhouses and if you can beat them, you can beat anybody," said Mr. Peck.

Mr. Peck sets his hopes high to win and appreciates the opportunity that We the People gives to his students, regardless of the outcome.

"Students take ownership of their own learning. It has a profound impact on the degree to which they care about American government and pay attention to it. The number of students that come out of it and say they want to study public service or law is

enormous," said Mr. Peck.

In addition to working on We the People for three to four hours outside of class, senior Danni Gonyo is one of the many students whose career plans are influenced by the competition.

"Next year, I'll be going to George Mason University and majoring in public administration and policy, so I definitely plan on using my skills from We the People in the future," said Danni.

Principal, Ann Poates believes that this opportunity is well deserved for Mr. Peck's students.

"This is a pretty wonderful place with people doing outstanding things across the board, but I think this would truly put us on the national map, which we don't often have an opportunity to do," said Mrs. Poates.

## News in Brief

### Student Talent Night

April 17  
DSF Auditorium  
Tickets: \$5

### Science Fair

Seniors, Jack Lohman and Colin Fenster competed in the Nationwide Science Fair held in San Jose, California. Although there weren't rankings the two students competed against other scholars. While in San Jose the two students also got to take a trip to visit Google headquarters.

### Scholastic Awards

Meredith Eudailey won a gold key for a piece titled "Math Class."

Tiya Booker recieved the following:

Silver Key (Poetry) for "Silent Fool" and "Secret Lust"

Honorable Mention (Poetry) for "Night Light" and "Closed Chapter"

Konstantin Rega recieved the following:

Honorable Mention (Poetry) for "All our Days are Gone; Floating Triangles; Gymnopedies"

Elizabeth Edwards recieved the following:

Honorable Mention (Science Fiction/ Fantasy) for "Exposure"

### Beta Club

In order to recieve the appropriate chords for these clubs, members must pay \$8.

### TSA competition

The following TSA club members that participated in the South Central Regional Conference at Highland Springs High School!

Extemporaneous  
Presentation - Arindam Gupta - sixth place

Dragster Design - Mohammed Ullah - fourth place  
Lyle Suemitsu - tenth place

Manufacturing Prototype Team- Arindam Gupta, Connor Lankford, and Ethan Bartlage - ninth place

### Choral Awards

Show Choir, Girls Ensemble, and Festival Choir competed in the state-wide Choral Competition held at Hanover High School. Below are the awards that they recieved.

Show Choir:  
Second place in B division  
Outstanding Sportsmanship Award

Natalia Araujo won Overall Best Female Soloist

Julia Paraiso won an individual award

Festival Choir:  
Third place in Acapella  
Third place in Chamber  
Overall Best Sportsmanship Award

Girls Ensemble:  
Third place overall

### Youth Art Month

Belated Holi Celebration  
April 17 - 4:30 p.m.  
Driver's Ed Parking Lot

Inside Out Project Paste-Up Day.

April 18- Help hang giant posters up in the cafeteria here at Freeman. Starts @ 9 a.m. Wall - Papering tools needed (i.e. brushes, cutters, seam selalers, etc.



## Students 'Speak Up' for Fallen Rebel

PHOTO: ABBY DONELSON

Abby Donelson, along with friends and family, runs the Shamrock Marathon in remembrance of her friend, Cameron Gallagher.

Coleman Greene  
Staff Writer

Abby Donelson wants people to get back up.

A year and six days after her friend Cameron Gallagher passed away of an undiagnosed heart arrhythmia after crossing the finish line of the Shamrock Half Marathon, Abby finished the whole marathon, along with her stepdad, Andrej Vlahcevic.

David and Grace Gallagher, Cameron's parents, also participated in the Shamrock Half Marathon.

"It was awesome to see Abby complete her marathon and it was amazing to see all these people. There were times during the course that were difficult and there were times where you would look up and see someone wearing one of her shirts and it felt really good," Mrs. Gallagher said.

In addition to running the March 22 race, Abby used her involvement with TEDxTalks and the Speak Up 5k Foundation to continue former Rebel Cameron Gallagher's legacy.

According to the foundation's website, the Speak Up Foundation was built to "fulfill Cameron's dream and legacy by being a positive force that works to cultivate awareness and understanding of teenage depression and anxiety."

"Last year before the half marathon, I was thinking that I wanted to do a full at some point," Abby said.

Abby said that after Cameron passed away, she decided to run the full marathon, in her honor.

"I knew it would be a hard day, but I figured it was completely worth it. I hope it will inspire people to be resilient and get back up," Abby said.

Like any runner training for a marathon, Abby committed herself to a rigorous training regimen.

"During the school week, I run 6 miles twice a week and I bike some on the trainer in my room 3 times a week. On the weekends, usually on Sunday mornings, I go on a long run" Abby said.

Abby met her personal trainer, Will Turner, through the Gallagher family. The

Gallaghers worked with him during their Ironman training and recommended him to Abby.

Mr. Turner, Head Coach of Endorphin Freaks, planned the weekly workouts for Abby.

"Her weekly training consisted of three bike workouts, three run workouts and two core workouts. These workouts are pretty intense," Mr. Turner said.

His main tip for Abby was to trust herself.

"She's done the hard work with all the training. She is ready for this, so now it's time to go out there and have fun," he said.

Coach Turner is encouraged by Abby's decision to run in Cameron's honor.

"Abby's decision to honor Cameron by running the marathon is an act of profound friendship and love. I am so proud of her," he said.

Abby's commitment to Cameron's legacy and the Speak Up Foundation inspired other Freeman students to run the Shamrock Half Marathon in Cameron's honor. Juniors Ana Myrtetus, Caroline Plashal, Austy Wood, Molly Cox, and Sammy Burr competed on the Speak Up Race Team.

"The whole idea about setting a goal and working hard to reach the goal inspired me," said Ana.

Ana admired Abby's dedication to goal setting in the marathon process. She also hoped the race would spread Cameron's story.

"I think it's just reaching out to and inspiring more people, and showing people that every time you reach a goal, just set a bigger one," she said.

She hoped that the participation of the Speak Up Team would help spread Cameron's message.

Another way that Abby hopes to spread Cameron Gallagher's story is through her involvement with TEDxTalks. This popular seminar series gave Abby the opportunity to speak at The Collegiate School last November.

"My friend Kaitlin was talking to them (TED) about how proud she was of me because I was doing all this for Speak Up," said Abby. They asked if she would like to speak and Abby agreed.

"My main focus was being compassionate," she said. In an eight minute speech, Abby spread the message to "just basically be nice to people."

She gave another speech the night before the marathon at the Comfort Zone Gala.

"It was absolutely amazing," said Abby. Her speech helped raise \$74,000 for the Comfort Zone Foundation.

Abby and the Speak Up foundation have big plans for the upcoming year.

"With Speak Up, at the end of May, we are having the Speak Up Revolution. It's the launch party but expanded," Abby said.

"Last year it was at Brown's Island, and this year it is at Richmond International Raceway (RIR). We are trying to get across that it's a family party and on the side it is the Rev 3 Triathlon. As the party is going on, we will have people running, biking and swimming," said Abby.

The Rev 3 Triathlon is sponsored by USA Triathlon that will be at RIR May 30-31.

Abby plans to compete in the triathlon.

There will also be a Speak Up 5k in San Diego in early May and another Speak Up 5k this September in Richmond.

Abby completed the marathon with a time of 4:59. For the final 3.2 miles, a group from the Speak Up Race Team joined her.

"At mile 23, Lizzie, Ellie, Alecys, Claire, Nelly, Mia, and Ana all jumped in with and ran the last the last 3.2 miles. I can't put into words what it meant to me."

The community that participated with the Speak Up Race team is only part of the impact that Freeman has had on the Gallagher Family.

"The Freeman Family has been awesome to us as a family. They embraced Cameron when she was new to the school and we feel like they still embrace us as a family. Their support and their kindness has been so awesome," Mrs. Gallagher said.

Abby's involvement and determination is appreciated by Cameron's family.

"She has a beautiful heart and she was so good to Cameron and such a true friend to her. I believe she is still being a true friend by all that she is doing for the foundation," Mrs. Gallagher said.

To get involved, go to [Speakup5k.com](http://Speakup5k.com) or the Speak Up 5k Facebook page.

## Man on the Street

What is your opinion of the new printing policy requiring students to use their lunch code?



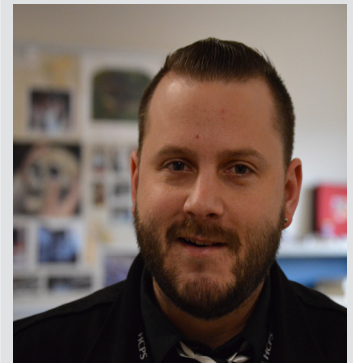
"I like the new policy and I think it gives students more freedom to come and get printing on their own. It frees up time for me because [before] I always had to get the printing because there was confidential information printed. There's still some tweaking I think needs to be done, but overall I think it's a very positive move," said Mrs. Lawrence, Library Secretary.



"I think it takes longer than necessary," said freshman Caroline Grigsby.



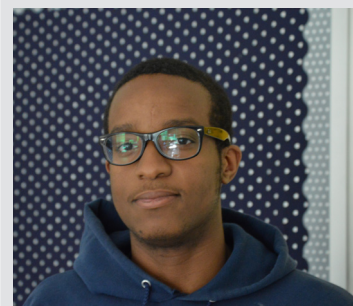
"It's very hard for students to turn in class assessments because they each have to independently pick up printing rather than picking up a class set. Students have a hard time finding time to print," said Mrs. Curry.



"It seems difficult for students to get things printed on time," said Mr. Pruett.



"It's been very inconvenient," said Mrs. Weber.



"It doesn't make a difference to me. We have a 500 page balance, but as a senior it doesn't make much of a difference to me," said senior Ryan Bryson.

## Students Organize Ridge Elementary Snack Drive



PHOTO: SYDNEY CATLETT

The snack pile for the students at Ridge starts to pile up as the fundraiser continues.

Sydney Catlett  
Staff Writer

According to principal Katina Otey, approximately 200 of the 524 students at Ridge Elementary School go hungry during snack time every day.

The Ridge Elementary School Snack Drive was set up by Heather McMunn, the sponsor for Future Educators Association and the teacher of Teachers For Tomorrow.

The Snack Drive accepted individually wrapped snacks like pretzels and goldfish.

"There is a snack time built into their morning schedule at Ridge Elementary and most students do not have a snack to bring, so the snack drive was put into place to make sure students are able to have a snack," Mrs. McMunn said.

"This snack drive will give our students the opportunity to have a healthy snack sometime during the school day, allowing them to focus on their learning instead of being hungry," said Principal Otey.

Many students in the Teachers For Tomorrow program see firsthand the students at Ridge

Elementary that do not have a snack.

"I'm in the second year of Teachers For Tomorrow and I was at Ridge last spring and all of this year," Laura Martin said.

Teachers have told Laura that many of the students receive free lunch, and she has noticed that three fourths of the students eat breakfast at school.

"I think this will benefit the students greatly, and they will be extra appreciative," Laura Martin said.

The Latin Club helped by asking students to bring in 10 pre-wrapped bags for the Snack Drive. Ray Moore and Carter Smiley, sponsors of the Latin Club, offered extra credit in exchange for the snacks.

"I hope the snack drive impacts the students in a positive way and give some of the kids snacks for some time," Ms. Smiley said.

Mrs. McMunn delivered the snacks at Ridge Elementary on March 13, but she said that if students continue to bring in snacks she would be happy to keep making deliveries.

"I'm the students won't continue to go hungry and I would like to make this an annual thing," Mrs. McMunn said.

# Class Rank: Should it stay or Should it go?



Connor Glowacki  
Opinions Editor

At one point in my web-surfing adventures, I happened upon a provocative statement along these lines: Education today is teaching students to value grades more than learning. That certainly is a large and general statement, but it is more important to consider from where this idea would arise.

Personally, I agree with this statement, but I cannot overlook that our education system as it stands, is impressive. That said, education is so important to a world growing more advanced there should be no end to the de-

gree in which our society seeks to improve the standards of education.

Unfortunately, recent efforts to improve education standards may have lead students toward an increasingly strenuous and competitive path—a path on which students dealing with rigorous schedules are plagued by stress and where students choose the classes they take, not because the material interests them, but because they want the honors credit; by default, the student's focus shifts to getting the highest grade possible rather than learning the material (there is a difference).

The competition here is in class rank; by extension, you might say it is about getting into the best college possible.

Colleges (whether purposefully or “not”) generally pick students from a graduating class's highest percentile, reinforcing the notion that grades and rank are the most decisive part of a college application. They are not.

Colleges use GPA as a statistic to make the decision-making

process easier, but GPA fails to capture any personality, or any indication of the strength of an individual's character and their incalculable uniqueness. The fault is not with the college admissions boards, since they (more or less) do consider character as part of an application.

Students, with the introduction of more standardized tests and AP classes, believe they need take the hardest classes available in order to compete with other students making the exact same decision. This is now the dominant strategy for most students, and it perpetuates the decision not to take classes more aligned with an individual's genuine interests. In effect, a student arrives to class prepared to Google answers online, get answers with classmates, and cheat the material rather than learn it, just to pass with a good grade. Learning is the goal in school, anything that promotes short cuts and cheating is contrary to the spirit of education.

Furthermore, the idea of class rank inherently creates “los-

ers”—to have a first, there must also be last. This, when our society displays education as the key to success in life, almost devalues the achievement of graduating high school, four years of what, I hope my peers agree, was no petty task. The consequences of this devaluation then serve to discourage the graduates of lower percentiles from believing that they are meant lead an accomplished life, when they just as deserving of great expectations as anyone from a class's top ten.

And, competition inevitably creates stress. The workload students will take on begins to grind away their free time, then their self-confidence, and finally their emotional stability (there could be a reason for suicide being the third-leading cause of death for individuals 15 to 24). When a student's idea of what needs to be accomplished in high school ends with an emotional break down, I would say that the competitiveness of class rank actually hinders a student's progress, since they give up on learning, their schoolwork, and their fu-

ture.

Why not then, get rid of class rank? If students no longer compare themselves to the people in front of them, they might experience a boost in self-confidence. If there is no longer the need for students to destroy themselves trying to compete for a spot in the top ten, imagine how much more energy could be devoted to actual solid learning; imagine the emotional benefits individuals receive studying what they love and not what they feel compelled to in order to protect themselves. Students should be able to take classes relevant to their authentic passions without feeling penalized for it.

As a side note, Valedictorian does not mean first in class; it is a designation for the student who delivers the valedictory, the farewell address to all of the graduating class, and usually an address that commends every student on their achievement, expresses a feeling of unity with peers of a shared experience, and hopefully ends with some heartfelt tears.

Fill out this survey and tell us what you think here: <http://goo.gl/forms/zQHmn0iqjO>

## What it's like to be a Benchwarmer



Carissa Campbell  
Opinions Editor

This is not a motivational benchwarming story at all. Actually, it sucks.

In the past, I used to be a three sport athlete, thinking that if I did sports I would be happy if I could make my parents happy and my potential colleges happy. The reality? They could care less. Why? Because I was a benchwarmer.

It took me three years to realize that none of the work I was putting into my sports was being appreciated. I would show up to every practice just to fill my duty as the practice dummy. Whatever good things I did in practice, I would sometimes be praised for, but never was rewarded playing time.

After a while, I couldn't take it anymore and decided halfway through the lacrosse season last year that playing senior year was not going to happen. I accepted

my place and watched for the rest of the season, and here's why:

I would stand there, waiting for my shining moment to come every game, only to hear the buzzer run out and my hopes of touching the field run out with it too.

My skills eventually got worse because I was no longer getting in the game. I knew it, my parents knew it, hey even the coaches knew it. The only way to fix it is to get in the game and actually play, but even that rarely happened.

I lost confidence in myself and my ability early on. I even started telling my parents to stop coming because not only was it embarrassing for me, but it was also for them.

Never knowing when I'd actually play, they would sit there waiting. Sometimes my grandparents would come, even in poor health, and never got to see me play.

Slowly but surely my hopes and dreams of becoming some star athlete vanished. I started playing in 8th grade and loved the sport. I moved on to freshmen year and loved the sport. I got to my sophomore year and thought I was so cool for making varsity but never played. I told myself junior year would be better, but it wasn't.

Being a benchwarmer became a routine for me. Go to school, go to practice for a few hours, come home upset and slammed with homework. Repeat.

Somedays I wouldn't get home until 10:30 from a game that I didn't even play into a whole night of studying. It got boring and was no longer exciting for me anymore.

When it was gameday, I would know before it even started that no matter how well I warmed up or was feeling that day, I wouldn't go in. I didn't matter.

After a while though, benchwarming started to get boring and repetitive. I had some fellow bechwarmers to keep me company along the way (you know you who are).

I would be there every day, rain or shine, even in the cold hanging out with my fellow benchwarmers. Our conversations switched from being about the game to clothes, boys, and anything else we could think of. It was more fun that way.

For all those fellow benchwarmers out there, current or former, rethink what you're doing.

If you're playing it just to wear the jersey or to please your parents, you really shouldn't be. It's not helping the team or yourself and is taking away

precious time that you could be using to do actually things you like to do.

If you're playing because you love the sport and always have, good for you. If you love playing the sport but don't actually play (how ironic, right?), quit it. Don't waste your time like I did. It will save you stress, time, and money.

The team was amazing last year, we won a lot of games and went into postseason, but I was never on the field when those exciting wins or our tough losses. None of them were caused by me playing (because I didn't!).

By the end of the season, I had been written out of any possible lineups and I sadly became okay with it.

The harsh reality that comes with being an athlete is that there will always be benchwarmers.

If this is you, please rethink what you are doing. Why? Because your time is valuable, and you could be missing out on something much more rewarding.

I now have a very minimal stresslevel and have plenty of time to have a social life and even a job.

Quitting is frowned upon, but sometimes you have to find something that makes you more happy. I'm not telling you to quit, but I'm telling you to find something better like I did.

## Regency Mall: Should it stay or should it go?

Mary Rockwell  
Opinions Editor

Every day I drive through the short cut through Regency to get to the neighborhood behind Freeman. The speed limit is 20 miles per hour, so I am practically forced to stare at the vast empty parking lot as I meander by. I have only seen that part of the parking lot filled once in my 4 years... for a giant car sales event.

I never saw Regency in its glory days. After Short Pump Mall arrived, Freeman's backyard mall was never the same. I think the latest decision to revitalize the mall by local companies is a fantastic idea for our community. Regency is one of the last standing indoor malls in our region, thus it is a unique place that should be preserved. One revitalization I suggest is to completely redecorate the interior by focusing on high-end stores and architecture, making the mall more inviting to customers outside of the Freeman area. By revitalizing its distinguishing mall characteristic, maybe Regency will return to their glory days -- and fill more parking spots, too.

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Trent McCaffrey  
Luke Twente

### Opinions:

Mary Rockwell  
Carissa Campbell  
Connor Glowacki

### Special Features:

Caroline Forrest

### Arts and Entertainment:

Shannon McCarthy  
Sebastian Hughes

### Staff Writers

Sam Anderson	Grace Gemmell	Gates Towell
Jamie Bacon	Coleman Greene	Rachel Varon
Yashia Burrell	Trey Holsten	Michael Wagner
Sydney Catlett	Livi Justis	Maddy Waldron
Emma Dixon	Clayton Leep	Jack West
Ashley Frederick	Connor Loughran	

### Copy Editors

Caroline Forrest | Connor Glowacki  
Leah Dillard | Alex Gilliam

### Staff Advisor

Lauren Lombard

The Commentator is a publication of Douglas Southall Freeman High School

Principal: Anne Poates

8701 Three Chopt Rd. Henrico, Virginia 23229

<http://schools.henrico.k12.va.us/freeman/>

Phone: (804) 673-3700

ldlombard@henrico.k12.va.us

Letters to the editor are encouraged. They must be signed before they can be printed. Because of variety and space, only a limited number of letters be published. The Commentator reserves the right not to print a letter.

## Once Upon a Printing Policy

The everyday struggle DSF students face when all we want to do is just print something before class.



Sarah Ashman  
Editor-in-Chief

I love printers. I remember the first time I used a printer: I had taken a “Which character are you?” quiz for Hannah Montana on DisneyChannel.com, and being thrilled with receiving “Lilly Truscott,” I printed the page out to post in the scrapbook so I could reminisce on my results later in life.

With the new printing policy at Freeman, printing feels like that very first time every time... what a rush.

The combination of a specific printer assignment, printer code, and the resulting line has created a magical printing experience for Freeman students. First off, I've always wanted something to call my own at Freeman. Now that I have LP1 as MY specific printer, I feel complete. My only question for Henrico County is,

why stop there?

Why not assign each student his or her own specific bathroom and stall? On the other hand, perhaps their own specific entrance and exit to school? I don't know about you, but I would love to enter and leave school through the band room each day: I would really enjoy the extra walking to get to my first period near the bus ramp!

However, I'm nowhere near as excited about the specific printer assignments as I am about the printer codes. At Freeman, students are lucky enough to be challenged every single day by the assortment of codes they have to memorize: their student ID, their class numbers, their Edmodo passwords for math, their College Board account passwords, their power school passwords, which we now change every few weeks, and so many more!

However, because some students were beating the system and using the same password for a variety of things, Henrico County, in an effort to save its student's memories from turning into mush, assigned us a completely new printer code to keep us on our toes! This code doubles as our lunch code, but for students who have never bought lunch, it's time to learn it.

Not only does the printer assignment and code have memory benefits, it also has produced something tangible: a 50-person line in the Library! This new line is a symbol of fairness throughout the halls of Freeman.

Instead of letting teachers pick favorites by sending one person to go get the printing, the entire class must now go to the library together, which sponsors a sense of community.

The best part of the line that it gives you an escape for some solitary contemplation, because even though you are surrounded by your friends from your class, you must be silent in the library.

Personally, I use this 20-minute wait to refresh my Instagram feed 40 times and watch randy's snap stories. After 20 minutes in the printer line, a 47 minute class just flies right on by!

The subtle beauty of the printing policy is that it's so subtle; literally, no one knew it changed! The administration accomplished this by sending all the new printing policy information to our school emails, which we never check.

It was like a super fun game of “hide-in-seek” or “where's waldo?” Mysteries are the best; especially when your paper is late if you can't solve it.

# International Lit Organization at Freeman

Yashia Burrell  
Staff Writer

"Most Americans can read, but most of them don't realize what a gift it is. Being able to read opens so many doors in your life and we don't even realize it. All around there are people, especially girls, who will never learn, never have this opportunity," said junior Cailey Cummins.

Reading has always been a part of Cailey's life, and she was eager to share this love with as many kids as possible in as many communities as she could reach.

"We read a lot of books to Cailey, and there was nothing better than a trip to the library and coming home with a stack of books. But I would have to say her father has helped her continue her love of reading with all the books that he recommends to her," Druanne Cummins said.

Now, with LitWorld Teen Advocates (LTA), a chapter of the international organization she began at Freeman, is teaching the importance of reading and education to young kids across the community, one book at a time.

LitWorld is an international

non-profit organization that aims to implement innovative solutions to the literacy around the world, through camps and programs that bring the joy of reading to youth around the world.

While interning at a LitWorld office in the spring of last year, Cailey and the CEO of LitWorld thought of bringing the organization to Freeman.

LitWorld's goal is to teach kids how to read and love reading, but to Cailey, there is much more to it. Cailey has seen first-hand the effects this organization and the spread of reading and education can have on lives.

"Personally, I love seeing the impact LitWorld has on communities around the world. I had the opportunity to Skype with a group of women in Kenya who supported LitWorld and it's amazing what they've done for these women. I hope this club will be able to help people in Richmond and bring the love for reading I used to have back into the lives of myself and the other club members," said Cailey.

Even though the club is just getting started, LTA at Freeman has participated in World Read Aloud Day, had partnerships with the Peter Paul Development Center, the Boys and Girls and Boys Club, and many different reading events at elementary

schools in the area.

"To be honest, we are just getting started, but the kids we read to love it, and I think that our plans to go and read to them more, especially in smaller groups will be super appreciated," said Cailey.

Maybeury, one of the closer elementary schools in the area, has had the club there to read to the kids on several different occasions.

"We've been in contact with the librarian there who has helped us set up our first reading and hopefully will continue to do so," said Cailey.

Appreciative of the work done so far, Cailey, the founder and president of LitWorld at Freeman, still thinks the clubs work has just begun and is hopeful for all the club can accomplish.

"Now it's time for us to dive in and see how well we can establish this club in our community. Hopefully we will gain more members and be able to help more people.

Her mother, knows this go-getter attitude is just a part of who she is.

"Cailey is persistent. Once she decides to do something, there is no stopping her. And she had some great support from the LitWorld team in New York and the teachers who have helped her



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

**LTA members: Maddie Albrecht, Keely Wood, Ann Allred, Cailey Cummins, Hannah Lettshek, Harrison Carr, Amanda Sasina, Emily Bratton, and Ryan Bryson.**

at Freeman. I'm excited to see how Cailey and the LTA team will bring reading into the lives of other children in Richmond," Mrs. Cummins said.

Getting people to help her in this venture wasn't too difficult. With many teens at Freeman eager to spread the importance of literacy.

"I was surprised at how many people wanted to participate, the problem is actually getting them to do so. We've been working on building up a committed membership," Cailey said.

LitWorld Teen Advocates

(LTA) is about helping others as much as possible, and Cailey feels she has been impacted just as much as the kids she hopes to help.

"Literacy gives you the ability to truly express yourself and transports you to different worlds and different times. I love what LitWorld does because they don't just teach kids to read, they teach kids to love to read and to love themselves and be advocates for themselves," said Cailey.

## Student Musician Makes Melodies

Jamie Bacon  
Staff Writer

We play a lot of Indie Rock, like Black Keys," said Molly.

Since she started playing with Michelle, Molly has written four songs. Her music writing process is simple.

"I'll write in my notebook whatever comes to mind. It doesn't have to make sense or be coherent, as long as it sounds good," she said.

"Sometimes it can take as little as twenty minutes to write a song's lyrics... sometimes it takes a few weeks," she said.

After gathering the lyrics and placing them with different choruses and deciding on the order, she starts the process of matching the guitar and drum accompaniment.

"My music is really inspired by the Canadian band, Metric. I also really like the sounds of the Black Keys and Jack White. There is something about their sounds that is different and makes their music unique," she said.

Molly and Michelle will take out the band's songs that they like, add their own "twist" on it, and then write. It can be anything from a guitar riff, a drum beat, to playing in Drop D (tuning the

guitar to a different key).

Molly attributes a lot of her talent to her mentor, David Loving and his band, "Solace Sovay." Molly and Michelle met Loving when they signed up for their first band camp.

"He is my private guitar teacher and helps the band with whatever we need help... He helps me learn the songs I want to learn, helps book us gigs, and sometimes even plays bass with us."

Along with David Loving, Molly's parents are very supportive of her music.

"They pay for my guitars and music lessons. They love that I'm so passionate about music. It's kind of my happy place, and it makes them happy that I'm happy," Molly said.

"She is looking into universities that offer music business degrees...the music opportunities will play a big role in where she chooses to go to college," said Kasi Strauchler.

Molly and Michelle are playing at the Jackson Davis School Carnival this May, as well as at the Byrd Carnival later this spring.

## A Day In the Life of:



PHOTO: ERIC ASPLUND

6:30 – Get up

7:00—Head to football workouts

7:15 – Max bench 165 pounds

7:20 – Max squat for 225 pounds

7:25 – Work on wide receiver and safety drills to get ready for the season

8:00 – Pick my hair and get ready for school

8:40 – Walk to school while listening to Drake and other rap

8:45 – Almost get hit by a car crossing the street because I had my Beats on (Good thing he slammed on his brakes and honked)

9:00 – Sleep through math class

12:00 – Eat lunch from home because the school lunch isn't that good

2:15 – Mr. Pillow's History where everybody just goofs around

3:10 – Study hall

4:00 – Track practice

5:45 – After practice I walk home, take a shower, and eat a snack

7:00 – Do homework or play Grand Theft Auto online with some friends from Tucker

8:00 – Chill, watch TV, and text people

11:00 – Bedtime

## FBLA Heads to State Competition

Gates Towell  
Staff Writer

### Regional Winners

Ashley Adams

Daniel Cole

Cassie Hill

James Irby

Rubble Kazi

junior, Rubble Kazi said.

Future entrepreneur senior Ashley Adams said, "Originally I wanted to start my own business after college with film, so I figured it'd be a good thing to jumpstart that. I also took business law and business management, so I was like, 'Why not join FBLA?'"

Finding strengths in all her students, Mrs. Layne has asked particular students to join FBLA when she sees their talent.

"Sometimes I have to do a little arm-twisting to get them to do it, but I can tell by the way they are doing in class and what their interests are whether they would be a good competitor or not. Usually, even though they might not have volunteered, I ask them to do it, and they are really excited about it," Mrs. Layne said.

Different students won for

different subjects at Regionals. To win, most took tests.

"My competition was economics. I just took a test. I take AP economics, so I didn't really have to study because it didn't go beyond the AP material," Rubble said.

For junior Cassie Hill, FBLA was something that her family wanted her to do.

"I joined because my mom was an accountant, and she wanted me to join," Cassie said.

With theater as a priority, Ashley has tight schedule. However, she found time for FBLA

"I want to say business and theater are somewhat similar. They both work with people. When you start your own business you have to know how to work with people and how to treat them well and with respect," Ashley said.

The state competition is April 10-11 in Reston, Virginia at the Reston Hyatt. They will travel together with other winners from around Henrico County.

"It's a fun trip and everyone from Henrico County rides together. When they see the other kids studying, they get pretty hyped up about it," Mrs. Layne said.

"Even if I somehow can't do the whole film thing, I feel like the FBLA helped me in the long run. Business gives you a wider perspective in life," Ashley said with a smile.

**Access The Commentator Blog  
to Read About Ethan Payne and  
Burger King Tuesdays:  
[dsfcommentator.wordpress.com](http://dsfcommentator.wordpress.com)**



PHOTO: TEDDY SCHERER

Elizabeth Leszcyszyn, junior and Emily Dawson, junior both donate blood to go to the Virginia Blood Bank.

## Freeman Students Save Lives

Connor Loughran  
Staff Writer

Junior Ellie Leszcyszyn donated blood in an effort to repay for the transfusion that saved her mother's life.

"My mother had a fibroid tumor, and lost almost half of her blood from it. She had to have emergency surgery, I thought I was going to lose her from it," Ellie said.

Although she felt anxious before the drive, her dedication to the cause shone through.

"This is just my way of giving back after all they [other donors] have given me and my mom," said Ellie.

Freeman's Key Club hosted its 2015 spring blood drive on March 17 in the small gym, giving students like Ellie a chance to make a difference. DSF collected a grand total of 56 units of blood, just short of the Virginia Blood Services goal of 75 units. However, this total is up from the 38 units collected in the fall.

"I would credit that to the work the Key Club officers did spreading the word," said Ben Fabian, Key Club sponsor and social studies teacher.

Due to the imposition of several snow days this year, the Virginia Blood Services had to cancel blood drives at schools across the state; they were in great need, to which the Key Club responded with diligence and creativity.

The Key Club felt the need to improve their advertising in ways beyond the morning announcements, so they implemented a large tablecloth in the cafeteria for students to sign/pledge their

support for the blood drive.

"I think advertising plays a huge role in the blood drive turn out. However, I think the word of mouth contributed more than advertisement. When people heard about the blood drive from their friends they were convinced to join in," said Jackson Ellis, senior and Key Club president.

The actual logistics for donating are fairly simple. Students must have parental consent if they are under 18, a photo ID, and must complete mandatory screening to ensure a healthy donation beforehand. Also, prospective donors that have travelled to malaria-infested countries must wait a year before donating. The blood must be in prime condition, which is why it is important to have plenty of viable candidates.

"You have to be healthy and well, not sick in the slightest," nurse Valerie Monae said. "You can't even have a little sore throat or cough because of the risk that the virus is still alive in your bloodstream."

The impact of these drives reaches many different factions of people, including DSF principal, Ann Poates. Mrs. Poates's husband suffered several injuries from a motorcycle accident in 2013, and it altered her perspective on the importance of donating.

"It was the first time that either one of us had a need for using blood provided by donors, so it changes things when you're on the receiving end," Poates said.

Ms. Monae was inspired by the dedication and generosity of the donors, and there is one donor that has made the job especially rewarding.

"I remember one time at VCU when I was working on a girl whose best friend passed away from cancer. She said she thought of all the donors as heroes, because they kept her friend alive just a little longer," Monae said.

Despite all of the benefits from donating, Freeman still has a small turnout rate compared to the large student body. Only 83 students signed up, and that number can go down as people are turned away for various restrictions.

Mrs. Poates credits that setback to a fear of needles or the aftermath of donating, but "those who work the drives are very skilled at making this as painless as possible," Poates said.

"Just try to think about the potential good you are doing; if you have not done it and you are old enough to do so you should consider it," she said.

However, many students and teachers who took the time and energy to donate were able to maintain a positive outlook in spite of the fear.

"It's no matter what happens to me after I give my blood because if I could help save other people in any way, then it's totally worth it," Junior Ethan Becker-Mowery said.

The beauty of donation is that there is a guarantee that the blood will save someone's life; it's just a matter of whose life will be saved.

"It really is a situation where the life you save might be your own, the bad accident where you need the blood. If you are ever in that situation, you'll be happy that you donated," Mr. Fabian said.

## MEET THE WDSF STAFF



Gulfman Ashraf, senior

"WDSF has made me want to go into broadcasting, especially advertising—you can make a lot of money."

"I feel that because of WDSF, People already know your name when they meet you for the first time."

Antjuan Jefferson, senior

"It (WDSF) improves your relationship with the school because there are more people know, you and I have made new friends because of it."

"The most challenging part of is when the office sends in the announcements late and you have to get it in on time so the announcers can read it."



Malcolm Taylor, senior

"I love doing the weather. I am the chief meteorologist, and so people refer to me as that in the halls."

"It is sometimes challenging when 5 minutes before we go live, the mac and the video board stop working and we can't have videos or pictures so it is boring."



Andrea Carey, junior

"I film pep rallies and games, and projects after school, and projects that you have to complete outside of school, takes a lot of time and effort."

"Don't take this class just to get the credit, take it because you want to pursue that area, don't slack off, and put in the work for WDSF because you love it."



Coleman McClellan, junior

"The most memorable moment on WDSF was when Owen messed up and could not get words out of his mouth."

"It is a fun early bird elective that can appeal to everyone"



Virginia Irby, junior

"I definitely like anchoring the best because you get to more animated with yourself and the community."

"I signed up for photography and there was no early bird photography class so I got put into that class. I really enjoy it though and I'm glad I'm in it instead of photography"



Austin Stewart, junior

"When you are on there you lose a lot of this nervousness. The first time you are afraid to mess up, but it happens, you will see a lot of people mess up: FOX, MSNBC, they mess up all the time. But you get over it. It is fun. I have had my fair share of blunders."



Owen Payne, junior

"I like WDSF because, aside from the stereotypical high school hierarchy that Freeman hails, it does give you the feeling of belonging and family that you can get from your peers that I know other high schools lack."



Adnan Sabanovic, junior

"I think it would help with my talking skills, like when I am talking to someone else it would be easier."

"It helps me to get to know my classmates better. We have roles; every week we change roles – weather, sports desk, anchors, and also stuff on the computer."



## Student Wins Animation Contest

Sophomore Successfully Crafts a 3-D Helicopter on his Computer



PHOTO: JACK WEST

Zack proudly displays some of his animation work.

Kimberly Grice is his teacher at the Hermitage Tech Center.

The first competition took place at the school, competing against other students at the tech center.

"It took me about three days to make the design" Zack said. Even though Zack has become very skilled at animation, he wasn't expecting to win.

"I got a little worried, the people in the class are always telling me I'm really good at it, but we were going against second year [students], so I was a little worried," he said.

Zack said it felt "pretty amazing" to win.

For the competition in Roanoke in April, "they'll give us a prompt when we get there but it'll probably be something about as hard as the helicopter.

In his free time, Zack enjoys continuing his animation projects, and he is currently working on a "super-heroish" movie.

The characters "have to save the city from a bad guy that's attacking it.

They use robots and stuff, it's more about the action than the story," he said.

He even uses techniques such as a green screen to create the special effects.

When he is finished with the movie, he hopes to publish it on YouTube.

With all the filming completed, the only part left is the editing.

He expects the final movie will be a full feature length at about 90 minutes.

Zack hopes to have a career in film making, but in the meantime, he will be building his resume with activities such as the Skills USA contest.

the Skills USA competition won first place, and on April 11-12, he will be competing at the state competition in Roanoke.

Zoned for Freeman, Zack spends his mornings at Hermitage Technical Center studying animation, AutoCAD, and technical drawing.

According to the website, Skills USA is a program designed to "empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens."

Over 300,000 students and teachers participate in the Skills USA program each year.

"We use a program called 3DSmax, and you can create objects and animate them and that's how we do our projects on there," Zack said.

Rachel Varon  
Staff Writer

Aspiring animator junior Zack Oliveri recently won an award for successfully flying a helicopter over his own city, all the while sitting comfortably at his computer.

It was part of his 3D animation project which is sending him to the state competition.

"He flies under the radar, and it is really interesting to know that there is so much potential hiding behind that reserved persona" said Brian Durette, Zack's English teacher.

"I am a little bit quieter than the average person," Zack agreed.

Zack's animation project for



## Lacrosse Players Show Promise

*Senior Looks to Go Far in the Playoffs*

Leah Dillard  
Sports Editor



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Last spring, the school buzzed about the success of the varsity boys' lacrosse team. For the first time in the team's history, they won the regional championship. With this achievement under their belt, the team, led by senior James Blevins, is approaching the 2015 season with high expectations.

James, one of the team's defensive captains, started playing lacrosse when he was 13. Since then, James has dedicated his off-season time to lacrosse.

"I have played on multiple travel teams during the off-season. I spent my freshman year on JV and have played for varsity since then," said James.

In previous years, James looked to older students as role models.

"I looked up to other defenders like Mason Wells, George Cloud and Graham Stephens, both for their skills and leadership abilities," said James.

Now, James helps drive the team toward a successful post-season. Despite this seemingly difficult task, the talent and poise of this year's group makes James' job relatively easy.

"I am a captain and it is a leadership role, but the team has so much experience this year that being a captain is simply a title. All of the experienced players on the team serve as role models to the

younger players. [It is] not just a select few," he said.

"I have improved by playing against [seniors] John Woolley and Evan Tyler, two of the best offensive players in the state, every day in practice," said James. Though James does not intend to play lacrosse at the college level, John is committed to play at Washington and Lee, and Evan will play at Jacksonville University.

James, John, and Evan and nine other seniors make up more than one third of the team. This group, despite its size, is tight-knit and efficient on the field.

"Our group of seniors is very close and has played together for a long time. We have great chemistry...we all complement each other's skill sets. That will help us during the season," said James.

This year's team features a couple of standouts, just like any other sports team. What makes Freeman's team unique is the number of consistently strong players on the field at any given time.

"I think we have some of the best athletes Freeman has had since I have been a part of the program. We have many multi-sport athletes and that really contributes to the athleticism of the team," said James.

James, who was a member of the 2014 team that won the regional tournament, is optimistic about the group's potential to win the region again and beyond.

"I am looking forward to seeing what this team can achieve in the post-season with all the experience we have. Our team will need to work on our defensive chemistry with some new starters," he said.

Even though the team may have some work to do, James is confident that lack of effort will not be an issue.

"Our goal is to be the state champion and we are going to do anything in our power to achieve that."

*Sophomore Commits to Naval Academy*

Jack West  
Staff Writer



PHOTO: KAROLINE NEASE

Having former college athletes as parents comes with high expectations for a young athlete. Sophomore Karoline Nease plans to follow in her father's footsteps by playing college lacrosse at his alma mater, the United States Naval Academy.

When Karoline was six years old, her father cut his college lacrosse stick in half and she and her older brother, C.R., learned to play together. Karoline began playing organized lacrosse in first grade.

The support from her family, coaches, and friends has helped her grow. Having parents who understand the pressures that student athletes face has helped Karoline as her workload at school increases.

"We know how much our parents did for us to make our dreams a reality. When we saw the potential in Karoline we just wanted to keep the doors open and keep her focused," said her mom, Kirsten Nease.

Coach Anne Trexler has also recognized her skill and versatility on both club and school lacrosse teams.

"I coached [Karoline] on a travel team for Storm; she's a super fast player. She can go from defense to midfield to attack... and in the classroom she is as talented as she is on the field. You can plug her in anywhere and she can make the play happen," said Mrs. Trexler.

Karoline's close friend sophomore Trudy Grattan has also helped Karoline develop as a player. Trudy plays goalie and Karoline plays midfield so the two

are able to practice together to strengthen their abilities as players.

"Trudy and I are very competitive with each other and have helped each other become better players. I can help Trudy with her saves and Trudy can help me with my shots and defensive technique," said Karoline.

One of Karoline's goals has always been competing at the collegiate level. Because of her drive, Karoline said she has had to sacrifice much of her social life so that she can focus on lacrosse and other extracurricular activities. Karoline plays lacrosse and field hockey, swims, surfs, and is a member of the Freeman Show Choir.

Karoline's sacrifice paid off when she committed to the United States Naval Academy. Karoline described the recruiting process as "dating a school."

"I was never home on weekends and probably missed more school than I should have," said Karoline.

The recruiting process was difficult for Karoline because of the huge time commitment and vast number of recruiting rules enforced by the NCAA. Karoline had to go to clinics to start a relationship with a coach, play at tournaments so coaches could see her play, go on visits to schools, and make phone calls with coaches.

"It is really like another job for the player. Karoline had to write letters weekly to the schools she was interested in updating them with information about herself or thanking them for their time at a visit," said Mrs. Nease.

While Karoline has big plans for her college lacrosse career, she remains focused on the goals of the Freeman team.

After finishing first in districts and third in regionals last year, Karoline and the rest of the Freeman team will be aiming for the state championship this year.

Freeman's most difficult regular season competition this year should come against Atlee, who is putting in a new zone defense, at home on May 11. The team will play rivalry games at home against Godwin on April 17 and against Deep Run on May 13. With the vast talent that the team possesses with players like Karoline, the season looks promising for Freeman lacrosse.

## Seniors Look for Continued Success

*Saiyed Looks to Comeback This Year*

Clayton Leep  
Staff Writer

From her early start at soccer in third grade to entering her senior year of high school as a go-to scorer, senior Michelle Saiyed has kept one thing constant: her competitive nature.

Michelle made her soccer start at the Tuckahoe YMCA, but soon transitioned to travel leagues. From that early age to now, she has played for Richmond's premier travel organization, the Richmond Strikers, with the exception of some time spent playing for the Elite Clubs National League for Virginia.

A forward and outside midfielder, Michelle's competitive spirit faced an early test at Freeman: multiple injuries. During her freshman and sophomore years, Michelle faced numerous knee and ankle injuries that kept her off the field.

"It's always hard coming back from an injury when your team has been training without you, and you have to get back in shape and in the feel of things," said Michelle.

However Michelle did not let injuries stop her from experiencing one of her favorite memories as a member of the Freeman soccer program. Michelle scored Freeman's only goal in the first five minutes of the Deep Run game as a freshman to lead the Rebels to a 1-1 tie.

"That game was the only blemish on Deep Run's record that year. It was the only game that they didn't win, so that



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

was pretty cool," said Michelle. On and off the field, Michelle has maintained the respect and love of her teammates.

"Michelle is a great leader and a great player. She helps us score many goals and is a great teammate," said sophomore Meredith Given.

Going into her final high school season, Michelle has success on her mind. She is especially excited for the Godwin game which is the most anticipated game each year. The game will be held Thursday, April 2nd at Godwin High School.

"Every Godwin game, every year, everyone on the team always does really well and puts a lot of heart out on the field, which is really great to see and be a part of," said Michelle.

In college Michelle does not desire to play at the varsity level, but hopes to be a part of club or intramural soccer.

*Worsham's Path to VMI Shows Leadership*

Clayton Leep  
Staff Writer

In third grade, senior Rives Worsham and his younger brother Joseph signed up for a local soccer league. Now, they meet as rivals on the field both contending for the regional title.

Rives started at Freeman as a third string goalie. He was one of two freshmen on varsity. Despite his modest start, he accepted his role and bided his time.

"Every new kid has to learn his role and work on knowing his place," said Coach Sean Pratt. Rives definitely bought into this idea. He worked to put himself at the start of the rotation. He came in early to shoot with teammates and stayed after practice had ended.

Now the starting goalkeeper, Rives is one of the leaders on the team.

"He is a calm leader and everybody likes him," said Coach Pratt.

"We are the most diverse team in the league but we have learned to work together...last year we made it to the regional tournament, the farthest Freeman has gone in a while for soccer," said Rives. Rives averaged 5 saves per game.

Rives hopes to continue this success in 2015, especially in the Godwin game in which Rives will face his brother, a freshman midfielder. Godwin knocked Freeman out in the regional semifinal last season. The team will face Godwin April 2.

Rives is known to lighten the mood, looking on the bright side of every situation. This has become one of Rives' sig-



PHOTO: RIVES WORSHAM

nature characteristics as a soccer player.

"Rives brings a little validity and lightness, but when its game time he is ready to play," said Coach Pratt.

Rives believes his light-hearted mood is essential to the chemistry of the team.

"It brings everybody together and makes practice more enjoyable...[It] bonds everybody," said Rives.

Rives also makes sure to maintain the respect of his teammates. The defense depends on the Rives' sharp eye.

"Rives is a very solid goalkeeper in practice and in games and comes through in clutch situations. He also organizes the team defensively and communicates," said junior midfielder Michael Shafer.

Rives and his defense drove the Rebels to a historic season last year. They will look to take the next step this year.

Rives looks to continue his success in the sport next year at the Virginia Military Institute, where he will be the fourth generation Keydet in his family.

## Junior Jelani Vaults Over the Rest

Trey Holsten  
Staff Writer

Jelani Washington stands with his 14-foot metal pole. He has measured his run. He locates where he will jump. He reminds himself to not think too much. He does not want to mess up or overthink the jump. He runs up plants his pole and makes the jump that's over twice as tall as him onto the foam padding.

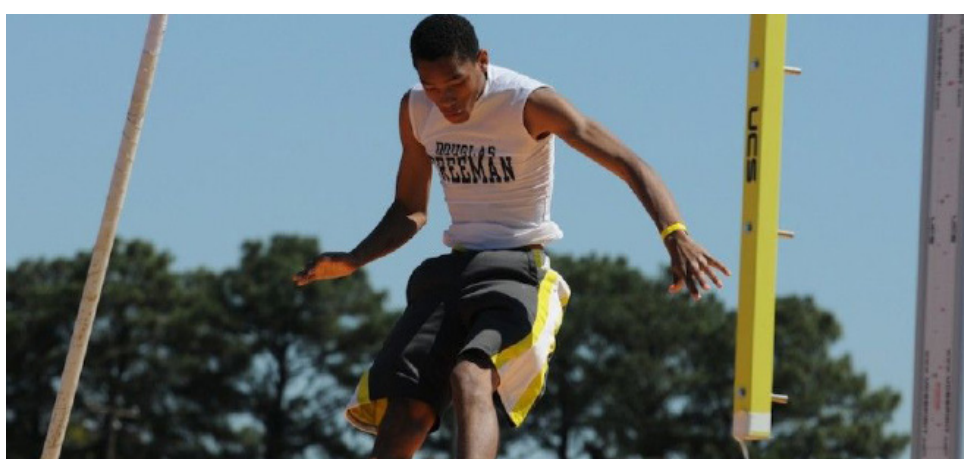
Jelani started pole vaulting his freshman year at Freeman.

"I just thought I would give it a shot," Jelani said.

Despite the fact he has only been pole vaulting for two-and-a-half years, Jelani has learned fast and is improving a lot.

"He had his best season to date in the winter," said Coach Reutinger.

In the winter season Jelani finished fifth



Jelani vaults at the MileStat invitational.

PHOTO: MILESTAT.COM

in the region. His jump for regionals, 12-6, was his best jump ever and earned him state qualification.

"It felt good because my jump used to be 11-6 but I changed it to 12-6," said Jelani.

"He has a lot of potential," said Reutinger. Jelani's potential cannot be wasted so he needs to practice well. He only practices pole vaulting twice a week at Freeman, running the other days. To re-

ally improve his pole vaulting, Jelani goes to Gym Quest where he gets coached by Valory Oспенko. With Val he practices his technique and jumping.

Because of his vast improvement, Jelani has received information from colleges for how he can join their track program. Jelani recalls that he was given goals of 14 feet and 15 feet. He must reach these goals to receive offers from colleges.

"Virginia State University and George Mason University have given me goals to reach to get a scholarship," said Jelani.

Jelani is just the latest addition and product of a program which has produced all-state pole vaulters in seven of its last track seasons, including a state champion pole vaulter in Zach Campbell (2013). Campbell won his state championship with a 15-0 jump, so if Jelani meets his college goals, he may also be in the hunt for a state championship.

## Baseball and Softball Take the Fields

### Junior Baseman Contributes to Renewal of Team

Matthew Heinicke-Peart  
Sports Editor



PHOTO: VIRGINIA IRBY

Despite a late start, junior softball player Gabby Barnes is ready to improve upon a fruitless 2014 campaign.

Gabby, the starting second baseman and a relief pitcher for the Rebels, is convinced that this year's squad is more experienced and ready than last year's.

"[The goal] is to get better. I just want to do better with the team, and hopefully we can do better than last year."

Last year's season was rife with rain-induced cancellations. Despite a short post-season campaign, the Rebels still played through the week of final exams.

There was also an overall lack of cohesiveness, something that Gabby doesn't

think will be a problem in 2015.

The changing team dynamic was something that Gabby especially stressed. The relationship between the coaches and players is "strong" this year, she said.

"Last year we bonded a lot, and this year we only have two new players on Varsity," said Gabby.

Her teammate, junior Virginia Irby, spoke about their close relationship and Gabby's contributions to the team.

"Gabby and I are practically sisters, so it's fun to get out on the field with her and...see her improve and push her limits. We both know what we expect from one another as far as performance, so we keep each other in check while also having a good time," Virginia said.

Gabby also helps other team members with her spontaneity and sense of humor.

"She is kind of a quiet player. She surprises us all sometimes with some of the plays she makes and is almost always there when anyone on the team needs her, whether as a teammate or just as a friend. I think everyone looks to her as the person to joke with and just have a good time with. She makes people smile...as a team it's really important to have someone with that quality so that you can instill confidence in the team as a whole," Virginia said.

Gabby mainly relies on her speed to give her an edge when she runs the bases or fields at second base.

Gabby's dad was a baseball player for the Rebels. Because of his influence, she started playing softball at a young age.

Look for Gabby and Virginia to propel the Rebels to a big season this spring.

### Future Division 1 Catcher Fighting for State Title

Sarah Ashman  
Editor-in-Chief



PHOTO: VIRGINIAPREPS.RIVALDS.COM

Freeman baseball fans rarely see the face of their catcher; covered by navy pads and a helmet, it could be hard to identify the player. However, there is no mistake at Freeman: Senior Logan Harvey is known by all for his skill and leadership on the field.

This spring, Logan is catching in his fourth and final season on the varsity baseball team.

Logan lives in the Godwin District, but attends Freeman through the Center for Government, Leadership, and Global Economics. Though Logan didn't choose Freeman for baseball purposes, he soon fell in love with the program.

"I originally chose Freeman solely for the Center... I was lucky...to come into a really successful program," said Logan.

However, Logan's goals for baseball were just as high as his academic goals.

"My goal was to win a state championship in baseball...and coming so close last year made me want to win one that much more," said Logan.

In August of 2013, Logan committed to playing baseball at the University of Wake Forest. Though he was interested in many schools, Logan felt that Wake Forest was the best fit academically as well as for baseball. "When I visited, it was simply the perfect fit," said Logan.

Logan did not predict the success he has experienced. He first realized his potential when he was interviewed to be the Richmond Times-Dispatch's "Player of the Week" during his sophomore year.

"That first interview was...one of the first times I ever realized you know, 'wow, I actually might have a real future with this'," said Logan.

Logan is excited to pursue his baseball career further and follow in his father's footsteps. Logan's father, Ken Harvey, was also a successful baseball player, and taught Logan the game.

"My dad played professional baseball... on the AA level and he was the one who introduced me to the game but...he never forced me into anything. It was always my decision," said Logan.

With such talent and supportive parents, the Freeman community is eager to see how Logan continues to succeed in the 2015 spring season, as well as in college next year.

## Tennis Teams Have Promising Potential

### Accomplished Junior is a Consistent Standout

Jack West  
Staff Writer

Not many people get the chance to meet their role model. Junior tennis player Joe Brown is one of the lucky ones. In 2013, Joe met Eric Butorac, a professional tennis player, at a college showcase event at the University of Mary Washington.

"Joe was able to see Eric play in person at the Citi Open in DC and was able to watch on television as Eric...advanced to the finals in the Australian Open in 2014," said Christy Brown, Joe's mom.

This experience increased Joe's love for tennis. Joe began playing tennis in 2008 at Raintree Racquet Club and has since put in countless hours of work to be one of the best players in the area.

Joe typically practices for 12-15 hours each week and plays even more when he's competing in a tournament. According to Coach Given, "Joe plays tennis seven days a week, 52 weeks a year."

Joe has relied on his family and friends for support during his tennis career. His dad attends most practices and games.

"Our family is very fortunate to have two close friends that are coaches [who] have been very instrumental in Joseph's development as a player. They help him with drills...and give him advice on tournaments," said Mrs. Brown.

"My mom has helped me to stay positive and my dad [is] my main coach," said Joe.

Joe's play style is focused on breaking down his opponents throughout the match. He uses his endurance and energy



PHOTO: TEDDY SCHERER

to tire his opponent and finish strong.

"Joe has an 'on button' that never turns off," said Coach Given.

Joe has received many awards, including All-Academic and All-Conference honors and the Richmond Tennis Association's Greg Semon award for enthusiasm. He finished 2014 ranked 26th in Boys 16's and 38th in Boys 18's (USTA Jr.), and earned a spot at the 2015 USTA/MAS Virginia District JTT Championships.

Though Joe is currently fielding emails from Division I and Division III tennis teams, his focus is on the Freeman season.

"My main goal for this season is to help lead our team to states," said Joe. He will be the number two seed for singles and will be the number one seed for doubles with his partner, senior Greg Akerman.

### Freshman Expected to be a Top Singles Asset

Trey Holsten  
Staff Writer

In high school, some students choose to take six classes, usually because they want to get out of school early in the day. Freshman Alexandra Smyth plays tennis every morning and only takes six classes. She comes to school every day at 9:55 a.m. so she can practice before school.

Alexandra has played tennis for ten years. She really became serious about the sport when she was in the eighth grade.

"I really enjoyed playing tennis and I want to play in college," said Alexandra.

Over the summer, she plays for Westwood Club. This past summer, the team finished second in the state and made it to the sectional competition.

"It was just amazing to look back and see that we beat all the other teams and how the hard work paid off. I also liked that we competed as a team," said Alexandra. Tennis, especially the singles division, is usually viewed as an individual sport.

Their toughest competition is usually Burkwood Swim & Racquet Club.

"We are very evenly matched. It's a fifty-fifty chance you'll win," Alexandra said.

She is coached by professional tennis player Romain Ambert, who has won multiple state competitions. Every day before school, Alexandra practices for an hour to an hour and a half at Westwood. She usually starts with a drill, then runs, and then finishes with some hitting drills. Alexandra describes practice as rigorous.

Alexandra is also a part of the Freeman



PHOTO: ALISON EDDINS

girls' tennis team, which is coached by Larry Parpart. Her goal for the season is to win as many matches as possible.

"I saw her play in the fall and I can see the improvement. She has worked very hard on her game. She also has a great feel for the game," said Coach Parpart.

During Freeman practices, the team usually plays challenge and doubles matches, and they will sometimes work on individual skills. During their matches, team members can improve their seed.

Coach Parpart said that their usual schedule has been pushed back because of all of the snow. Tennis courts are unsafe when wet. Because of this delay, players do not yet know their seeds on the team.

Whatever her seed may be, the future looks bright for Alexandra Smyth.

## Rebel Swimming Wins the County Championship

On Friday, Feb. 13, Freeman's swim club competed against Godwin, Deep Run, Glen Allen, Tucker, Hermitage, Varina, and Henrico for the county trophy. DSF, which had 61 members this year, also competed against private schools like Collegiate throughout the season.



PHOTO: JULIE FARNEY

## Sophomore Sprints to Success

Eric Asplund  
Editor-in-Chief

"She's got a bright future," said head track coach Brian Reutinger.

He was talking about Lauren Thornton, a sophomore sprinter who has already made a big splash on a very competitive girls sprinting team.

Lauren primarily competes in the 4x400m relay, the 4x200m relay, the 300-meter dash, and the 55-meter dash.

Her biggest challengers are not sophomores, but rather juniors and seniors.

"She's a really talented sophomore. She is somewhat in the shadow of two older girls who are very accomplished and faster than her," said Coach Reutinger.

Reutinger was referring to senior MacKenzie Kerr and junior Jordan Bourgeois, who finished 1-2 in the state in the 500-meter this past indoor season.

Despite her being "in the shadow", Coach Reutinger still values Lauren's skillset and team presence.

"She already is sort of a [flagship member of the team]," said Reutinger.

"She has really excelled. She has improved on competing. At indoor regionals in the relay, she gave us a very large lead. She kicked butt," said MacKenzie.

Lauren was on the 4x400 relay team this past indoor season that ended up finishing second in the state and competing at the New Balance Indoor Nationals meet in New York City.

In addition to her relay leg, Lauren was

an all-conference runner in indoor in both the 300-meter and 500-meter runs.

That team consisted of Jordan, MacKenzie, senior Carole Trevey, and Lauren – the only underclassman.

"It feels great to be on a team with upperclassmen, because it motivates me to work harder, strive to be faster and rise to the occasion," said Lauren.

"I see myself fast and being the best runner I can be," she said. "Some of my goals are to make nationals and run with the 4x400 [relay] again and run some single events as well."

Lauren said that furthermore, she wants to "help the team be the best it can be, and...be the best leader for the underclassmen and try to motivate them to be the best they can be."

In addition to her speed, Lauren maintains an extremely positive attitude.

"She's funny...it's fun to be around her. She makes practices more fun, and she reminds me to not take life so seriously... that's why I like having her around," said MacKenzie, who will run for Duke University next year.

"Lauren spices up practice. Her laugh is contagious," said Jordan.

Lauren's positivity may come from her gratitude toward her track "family."

"My experiences have been great. I have a great group of coaches and teammates that support me and help me strive for greatness," said Lauren.

The fact that she still feels as if she's striving for greatness helps show how bright her future really is.

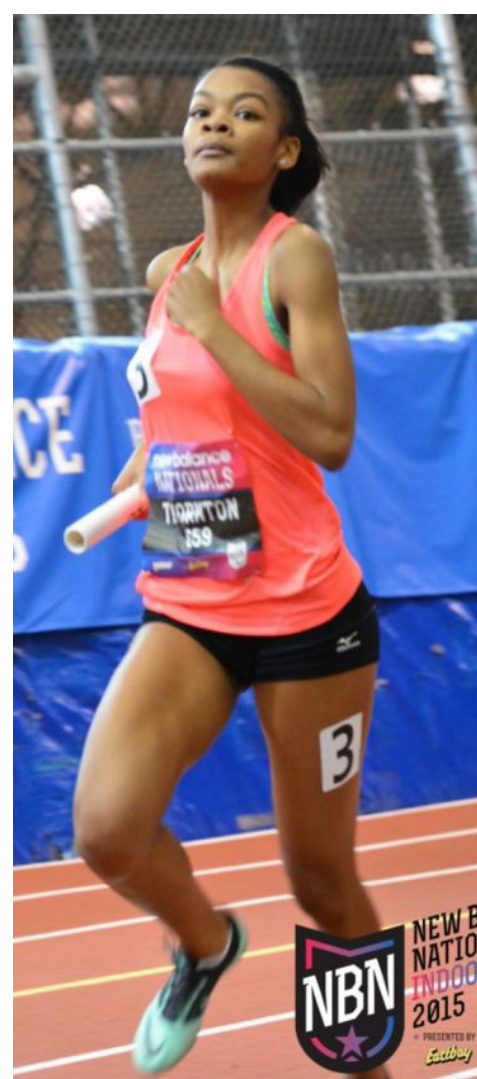


PHOTO: MARY ANN MAGNET



# Indoor Track competes in National Meet



PHOTO: CHUCK MARTIN MILESPLIT.com  
Ryan McCracken during his 4:32.15 run at nationals.

Michael Wagner  
Staff Writer

For the Freeman Indoor Track 4x400 meter relay team, breaking records is nothing new. Over the course of the Indoor Track season, the relay team broke the Freeman record, and then broke and re-broke it again, once on a national stage. The relay team consists of two seniors, Mack-

enzie Kerr and Carole Trevey, a junior, Jordan Bourgeois, and a sophomore, Lauren Thornton.

They competed this weekend at the New Balance Indoor National Championships in New York from March 13-15, 2015. The relay team received 13th place overall and broke the record they set previously this year.

Mackenzie Kerr, senior, said, "It was really fun. It was nice to be there and get the chance to

compete because Carole and I are seniors this year and it was also a fun team-bonding experience."

Mackenzie Kerr also ran the 400-meter dash, her strongest event. She won the Conference 11 meet, Region 5A South meet, and State 5A meet in that event, as well as winning the event in every other competition she was in this season. She is the only state champion to come from Freeman for indoor track this season and plans on attending Duke to run next year.

Carole Trevey, another senior on the relay team, said, "The atmosphere of the track was so fun and it was just a really cool experience to run with some of the best athletes in the nation!"

The members of the relay team were not the only members of the Indoor Track team to be in New York that weekend. Senior Tarell Cisneros-Harrison represented the Rebels in New York. He ran the 60 meter hurdles and the competed in the long jump.

"The 60 meter hurdles were a different event than I was used to, so I didn't do as well in the hurdles as the long jump," said Tarell.

Tarell received fifth place in the long jump.

"Overall it was a dream come true. I have wanted to go to Nationals since freshmen year, and running and jumping in this tournament will open a new

door to the future," said Tarell.

In addition to Tarell and the relay team, freshman Ryan McCracken also qualified for the New Balance Nationals. Ryan is the first freshman from Freeman to compete in Nationals on the boy's side.

He placed fifth at the meet for the freshman mile and ran a new best for him: a 4:32.15 mile. This time is also a record mile time for a freshman at Freeman.

"The Armory [the stadium] was pretty cool. It was also nice to meet other freshman runners

**"Overall it was a dream come true. I have wanted to go to Nationals since freshmen year"**

around the country," said Ryan.

"This meet had more pressure than one of the regular season meets because this meet had a lot more people watching."

Reflecting on the season, Ryan said, "it was a good season, I made a pretty big breakthrough compared to what I did in the cross country season. I am pleasantly surprised at how well it went."

Assistant Indoor Track and Field coach Avery McGilvary, who traveled with the team to New York, agrees "I thought

that we performed very well for being so far removed from the end of the season."

"It was really beneficial for the kids that went, because they got to compete against those who are the best high school runners in the nation. It gives them a sense of how good they are and also tells the other kids who didn't go that you can have the chance to go there with hard work and determination," said coach McGilvary.

Head Indoor Track and Field coach Brian Reutinger coach said, "The season was pretty good for the most part, but there is always room for improvement. Both the boys and girls teams accomplished good things this season."

With the season being over, the coaches are looking forward to the spring season. "Right now we are looking at the outdoor season. There are many of the same kids who do indoor and outdoor track so we are definitely going to push from the beginning to compete for the boy's state championship, and we are also pushing the girls team to be one of the top teams in the state," said Coach McGilvary.

With the individual success and team success at the state and national levels, it is safe to say that the Rebels Indoor Track and Field team had a very successful season and that the team will not disappoint in the spring season.

# Senior Leadership Steps Up As Baseball Looks Ahead

Sam Anderson  
Staff Writer

After an impressive run to the state finals last year, the 2015 baseball team looks to repeat a run to the playoffs.

"Our goal for this season would be to try and get better every day, from this point in the season until the post season. If we can take a little step each day to get better then by the end of the season we will be in a good position to make a run," said Ray Moore, varsity baseball coach.

The weather has presented many problems to the baseball team, as well as the other spring sports teams.

"We are working in the big gym, or at an indoor facility to try and create the most game like situations possible, since we are having trouble getting on the field," said Coach Moore.

Coach Moore said other teams are in a similar situation to start the season.

"We have not had as much field time yet, most teams are as far along as they could be which I hope doesn't rear its head in some of our games this year. We are working hard to get in the right mentality and ready ourselves for the regular season," said Coach Moore.

Still, despite the weather, the team is working hard to get in the right mentality make it back to the state finals.

"We are going to take the same approach as last year, wanting to beat everyone, but also have fun and not be tight, and last year we knew we were better than everyone else so it helped us have an approach for the season," senior Daniel Lynch said.

Daniel is also rehabilitating his back after having a stress fracture in his L5, a vertebrae in his lower back. His rehab has included rest in the beginning and then a lot of physical therapy.

"I have gotten back into lifting trying to get my core and my legs stronger," Daniel said.

The pitching staff is one of the

strengths of the team this year, as well as the experience that the team has.

"We have a lot of experienced players that have played in championship games, and a lot of our pitching staff remains intact from last year, and we have good team speed," Coach Moore said.

Challenges the team face ahead include, replacing leadership that was lost from seniors last year. There are players this year that are capable of filling these roles and take the place of the graduated seniors, according to Coach Moore.

Another major contributor to the team is senior Logan Harvey. Logan, a catcher, is going to in college at Wake Forest to play baseball. Daniel Lynch is committed to play at University of Virginia. Seniors Eric O'Brien and Travis Stackow are committed to play at Hampton Sydney. Senior J.T. Bellotti is committed to play at Christopher Newport University.

"Hopefully I'll be able to play as long as possible, while still

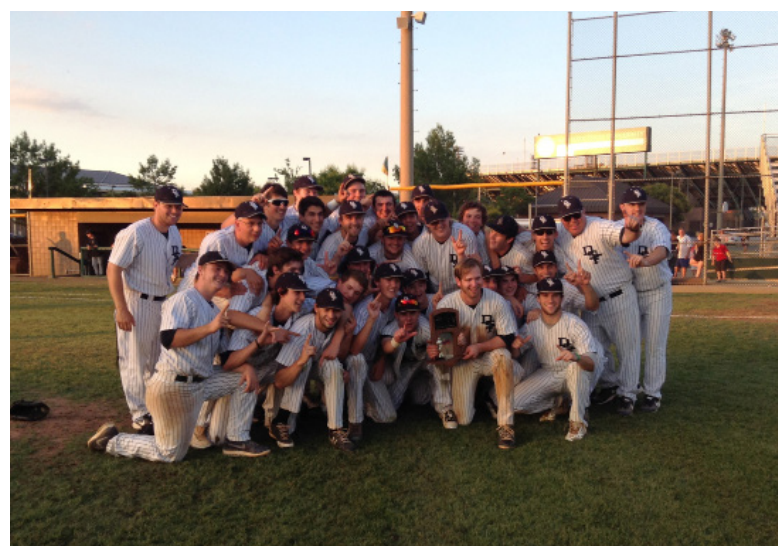


PHOTO: LOGAN HARVEY  
The Rebels look to build on the momentum from last season.

having fun," Logan said.

There is also a new addition to the coaching staff with the addition of Ross Tudor, the new outfield coach.

"He is really cool, and really young, and he understands what it's like to play for Freeman, he used to play for Freeman and so he has that go between for the coaches and the players," Logan said.

According to MaxPreps.com, the Rebels are ranked number one in the state and 33 nationally. The team's biggest competition include Lee Davis, and in the post-season Hickory.

"Winning states would mean that we have taken care of business every day, and it would be a tremendous accomplishment," said Coach Moore.



## Another Rebel Run Success



PHOTO: ERIC ASPLUND

The fifth annual Rebel Run was a success, Saturday March 23. Senior Peyton Artz finished in first for males with a time of 16:27. Kate Spangler was the first female to cross the finish line with a time of 20:38. The DSF Athletic Boosters raised over \$10,000.

## New Coach Takes on Girls Lacrosse

Matthew HP  
Sports Editor

Former collegiate lacrosse coach and school counselor Jennifer Crowder has begun her first season as the JV lacrosse coach at Freeman.

Coach Crowder has been itching to coach at Freeman, "Coach Drexler has asked me every year to be her JV coach. Unfortunately it hasn't worked for me. I have a small child, but she's 5 now, so timing-wise it worked out. She asked me close to the end of last school year and I said yes, which really surprised her."

It must've been a pleasant surprise; Crowder brings a wealth of experience to the team. She has coached for multiple teams on the collegiate and high school level, including Bridgewater College and Patrick Henry.

"It's nice to be back with the JV team, where some of them are still learning the game."

While Coach Crowder brings lots of experience about the game, there is still the challenge of learning new competition and a new system.

"I don't really know who's

going to be our toughest competition. It's hard to say. It's hard for me to say that coming into a new area; the last time I was coaching high school I was the Patrick Henry lacrosse coach, and that was five years ago, so it's changed some."

Coach Crowder coached that Patrick Henry team before the new VHSL state classifications, when Patrick Henry was in the same conference as Freeman.

"I'm still learning who has the stronger programs and who doesn't. At this point, we'll certainly approach every game as if it's our toughest competition."

"We started practicing a couple weeks ago and it's been great. I definitely felt like I've gotten to know the team; it's such a great group of girls and they're learning well."

Crowder's vision for her team is simple: help JV get better for varsity.

"It's nice with JV, because while our record certainly counts, it doesn't in a post-season sense, so we can use every game, wins and losses, to see where we need to improve.

So far, the Rebels have beaten James River on March 23.

## Inside the Many Faces of Freeman



PHOTOS: RAE LA BRIE

Freeman students use the Inside Out Project to unite the school by showcasing its diversity.

Maddy Waldron  
Staff Writer

Imagine if, on picture day, students were allowed to make funny faces. Now imagine that those pictures were allowed in the yearbook. The Inside Out Project makes that a reality, but bigger- 36in x 56in bigger to be exact.

On Feb. 12, 2015 over 300 students lined up in the cafeteria to be photographed for this project. The portraits are going to be pasted in black and white onto the walls of the cafeteria in a way that connects both of the rooms in the cafeteria.

The National Art Honor Society has been trying to think of an idea for a new mural in the cafeteria for several years. Seniors Peyton Spangler, Rachel Robb, and Annie Ward Love, co-presidents of the NAHS, could not seem to find the right fit for a new mural.

That was until Annie Ward found the Inside Out Project. The project is becoming a success with the help of Rebecca Field

and Mary Taylor Baker-Neal, and the NAHS.

The Inside Out Project was created by a man named JR. His purpose is to transform messages of individuals into works of art. "JR leaves the space empty for an encounter between the subject/protagonist and the passer-by/interpreter," according to the project's website.

"Everybody matters and everybody is beautiful and what better 'in your face' is this project?" said Mrs. Baker-Neal.

Inside Out is much more than just new art here at Freeman. It is the beginning of a change.

"These facial expressions tell stories. They show that though we all look different, and we come from different cultures, we all have this beautiful human awkwardness," said Annie Ward.

The mural in the cafeteria has been a priority to change, because it is no secret that there is social segregation in the cafeteria, and the NAHS wants to break that barrier.

"We are the second most diverse school in the county, and you see the division and we want to change that," Peyton said.

Through the change NAHS hopes to not only bring the Freeman community together but to raise awareness for individuality. They believe the best way to go about both issues is to speak through art.

"This generation of students are visual learners and they look at images constantly on Instagram and Tumblr and using the language people are familiar with is a good way to get across and connect with the student body," Mrs. Field said.

The Inside Out Project connects with people because each portrait and person has an underlying story. Every single person has their own story. The stories are told through the facial expressions of each student.

"To be photographed like this is to be vulnerable—to let the camera see the stories in your eyes. I'm so grateful to everyone who had the courage to do that," said Annie Ward.

The Inside Out Project is unique because it points out individual differences. These differences may seem to separate us, but actually can connect us.

The project is not only making a difference at Freeman, but it's making a difference worldwide. Nearly 200,000 people from more than 112 countries have participated.

"There are so many different countries and cultures being unified and people are excited about it and it's not just the art kids," said Rachel.

The NAHS teachers and students want the Inside Out mural to bring change. Around the end of April this desire for change will become real when the portraits arrive and are pasted on the walls of the cafeteria.

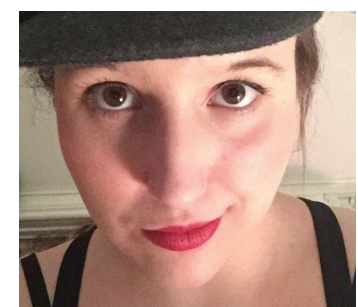
"It is simply saying we exist and we are together," said Annie Ward.

The students are not the only part of Freeman who are going to be brought together through the project. Teachers will not be featured on the walls but will be pasting the portraits up together in efforts to bond.

Once the portraits are pasted the art will speak for itself. The stories within the eyes and facial expressions of the students will be told for years to come.

## You Forgot the Fangirls

An Arts Opinion



Annie Spivey  
Features Editor

Fangirls. They're everywhere you look, but somehow you've never seen them. Maybe you think they're crazy or maybe you just don't understand, either way, you do what many people do when faced with something new or foreign...you ignore it.

For those who are unfamiliar with the world of fangirls, they are a collection of people who enjoy a particular book, TV show, movie, comic, band, etc.

They express their passion for these things in a number of ways that might seem a bit odd to someone who doesn't share their sentiments.

Common practices include reading and writing stories inspired by the original work (known as fanfictions) or creating works of art depicting various characters, scenarios, and ships (a pairing of characters one wishes to be in a relationship).

Others enjoy wearing fandom merchandise, quoting favorite lines, and discussing their OTPs (One True Pairing, meaning the favorite of one's ships).

Sounds pretty tame, right? Not too scary or complicated? That's because it isn't. If that's the case, then why do we make such a conscious effort to pretend fandoms don't exist or worse, that they are something to be ashamed of?

Let's pause a moment to think about this. It's fine to be a sports fan, an athlete, a history geek, a

cheerleader, an artist, an actor. It's fine for these people to celebrate what they love, but a fangirl ought to be quiet about her beloved characters and keep her "weird" fanfics away from the "normal people."

Maybe it's just me, but something about that doesn't seem quite right.

Naysayers cite explicit fanfiction and raunchy fanart as "evidence" to justify this fangirl shaming, but that is only a speck in the overall subculture.

There is so much more to this little world that is often overlooked in favor of its darker spots. So allow me to show you the hidden brightness.

Passion, creativity, camaraderie, inspiration. This is what the fangirl world is really about.

If you've ever read a book that you never wanted to end, or seen a movie that you would watch a thousand times over, or found yourself, you know what it's like to be passionate about something, which is the essential ingredient to a fangirl.

Fangirls have been in love with Augustus Waters, waited for their Hogwarts letters, become curiously suspicious of rings, checked behind the coats in their wardrobes, splashed in a puddle and called it "waterbending," craved blue food, wished for a sonic screwdriver, perfected Rue's whistle, and substituted "Live long and prosper" for goodbye.

Fandoms support a generation of creative minds and burgeoning talents, feeding them inspiration and possibility. This combination of talent and inspiration is the source of beautifully written fanfictions that explore paths the canon work chose not to follow and vivid art that visually realizes imagined scenes.

Mocking these wonderful works and dismissing them as juvenile or inappropriate is, frankly, ridiculous.

I, myself, have enjoyed the top quality fanfictions and saved lovely fanart on my phone, and I'm not ashamed. There was a time when I would have outright denied that I'd ever heard of fanfiction, let alone called myself a fangirl.

Now I wear it as a badge of honor. I'm a Potterhead and Disnerd, and I'm proud. I've shipped characters and had many an OTP.

I've read hundreds of fanfictions, including rereading my favorites, and even written a few myself (good luck trying to find them, I've hidden them well). I can, and will, quote all of the "Harry Potter" movies word for word if prompted. Disney songs will come spouting from my lips at the slightest provocation. Any "Avatar: The Last Airbender," "Legend of Korra," or "Teen Titans" reference will reach my ear from a mile away.

So don't ignore the fangirls around you. Ask them about their fandoms and watch as they light up when you mention the thing that they love so much, but never get to talk about. Let them know that their interests matter just as much as any popular sport or mainstream hobby.

If you think it won't make a difference, it will. Trust me. It makes all the difference in the world.

To all my fellow fangirls out there, if someone tries to convince you for one second that you ought to deny your passions, your inspiration, your source of joy, yourself, know that person is wrong.

So go binge watch your shows, reread your favorite book for the fiftieth time, draw fanart, write fanfics, wear fandom shirts, ship your OTPs, and celebrate your fandoms with gusto. Most of all, don't ever be ashamed of the things that bring you happiness.

Fangirl on, good people, fangirl on.

## Once Upon A Musical

The Douglas Freeman Players Presented "Once Upon a Mattress" on Mar. 26, 27, and 28.



PHOTOS: ANNIE SPIVEY

### Main Cast:

- Princess Winnifred - Ellie Priddy
- Prince Dauntless - Jamie Bacon
- Queen Aggravain - Ashley Adams
- King Sextimus, the Silent - Jack Fleming
- Lady Larken - Helena Maloney
- Sir Harry - Joe Burek
- Jester - Alejandro Brown
- Minstrel - Bradon Wallace

### Production Staff:

- Director - Mary Spears
- Scenic Design/Technical Direction - Ryan Imirie
- Musical Director - Nat Tuck
- Conductor - Rob Blankenship
- Cheographer - Jenny Fralin
- Stage Manager - Heather Belt

# Singing Takes Senior Every Which Way

*Virginia Tilley's Dedication Pays Off In Big Ways*



PHOTO: VIRGINIA TILLEY

Virginia Tilley sings with Freeman at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Mary Rockwell  
Opinions Editor

Imagine singing in New York City's famous Carnegie Hall and England's historic Canterbury Cathedral, only a few months apart. You would think that only super stars could be able to sing in places of such high tenor and prestige. Well, think again.

Now imagine a group of uber-talented high schoolers gathered

singing together in an auditioned choir in the renowned venues. Senior Virginia Tilley had the chance to be a part of both choral trips to these exceptional places this past year. These trips were not random, however. Virginia has been singing for as long as she can remember, and her hard work earned her spot for once in a lifetime experiences.

"I started singing in choirs at the age of 6 years old. My first choral experience was at All Saints Episcopal in the elementary age

girls' choir," said Virginia.

Since then, Virginia has been a part of several choirs throughout her life. Currently, she participates in five different choirs, four of which require auditions. The Freeman student body would know Virginia as a student leader of the Downbeats, the girls' Acapella group, and a member of Freeman's Festival Choir, which she has been a part of since she was a freshman. In her community, Virginia is a section leader of both the River Road Church Baptist Adult Choir and First Baptist Church Youth Choir. Right now, as a member of VMEA All State SSAA Choir, Virginia is preparing for competition after an extended process.

"All State is a choir that you audition for through District Chorus, so if you make District Chorus after auditioning in November, then on the weekend that Districts takes place in February you can audition for All State. All State Choir weekend occurs in the last weekend in April," Virginia said.

Virginia's out of school "choir weekends" allow her to travel all over the country, and most recently, beyond the United States borders.

This past summer, Virginia traveled to Kent, England, to the celebrated Canterbury Cathedral.

"I travel to a location, practice all weekend with the choir learning and memorizing music, and perform a concert on the final day of the trip. The purpose is to learn the music in a choral

environment where everyone has an interest and talent for music. Khaya Fraites and I...[will be] the only two choristers from Freeman High School that will attend," Virginia said.

Canterbury Cathedral, deemed the mother church of the Anglican community. It is the oldest church in England. Virginia and the choir contributed to the historic traditions by singing even-

**"The purpose is to learn the music in a choral environment where everyone has an interest and talent for music."**

song for ten days. Virginia explained that evensong is "a daily music-based service in the Anglican Church in the cathedral."

Virginia also recently went to Carnegie Hall in New York City with a non-school related choir for four days in February. They practiced and stayed in Times Square at the Sheraton Hotel. Virginia spoke highly of her time in the Big Apple.

"Guest conductors who lead choir weekends always shape my view on who I want to become as a choral conductor. No two directors' style is the same, and I enjoyed being under the NYC weekend choral director Dr. Eph Ehly's direction," Virginia said.

These two trips opened up

new opportunities for Virginia to meet singers and conductors from around the world. Her experiences from the "choral weekends" are inspirations for her goals beyond high school. Virginia plans to major in music and possibly go to England for at least one semester at Cambridge or Oxford to do music or choral studies. Beyond her undergraduate years, Virginia is set to achieve her goals.

"I plan to continue into a graduate degree in conducting at either The Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University or Eastman School of Music at Rochester University. In 10 years, I hope to be starting my career as a choral conductor in churches and choirs around the country," said Virginia.

With 25 hours per week of practice, Virginia continues to spend a significant amount of time on her music to prepare for her future. For anyone who wishes to follow her example, she has a plentiful amount of advice.

"Practice, practice, practice. Get the best training possible before college and start lessons at a young age. Grow your passion for each moment of the music so that by college you know without a doubt that this is what the rest of your life will be based around," said Virginia.

Virginia, with high school almost finished, is just melodically beginning on her way to a career filled with song.

# Independent Movie Theater Fated For Closure

Rachel Varon  
Staff Writer



PHOTO: SEBASTIAN HUGHES

The Westhampton Theater is slated to close later this year.

Westhampton Theater, a landmark of Richmond since its completion in 1938, will be closing later this year and Freeman students and faculty have bitter-sweet feelings about it. The building's aging walls house many memories of our city's history, as well as the memories of many Rebels who grew up with it.

"That was the first movie theater I ever went to," said junior Maddie Albrecht, "I saw Beauty and the Beast."

"I went there a lot when I was little, it's like a landmark of Richmond," sophomore Anna Lyle Collett said.

Junior Sammy Atcheson was upset to hear the news as well. "I'm a little sentimental about it. That's where I saw Toy Story, my favorite movie," said Sammy.

For some students, going to the West Hampton theatre was a way to spend time with their

family.

"I saw Black Swan there with my mom in 6th grade," said senior Elizabeth McClung.

Theatre teacher Mary Spears was very upset to hear the news as she lives in the same neighborhood as the closing theatre. "We don't have many art houses as it is so it's just sad. I wish somebody would have just bought and revamped it as a theater again, it's going to be very sad for the neighborhood."

According to the Richmond Times Dispatch, it is still unclear what the building will be turned into. The Cametas family purchased it, considering it to be a good investment, but don't have any specific plans for it yet.

Others were not as sad about the Westhampton closing, or, at least, were not surprised. Many commented on the uncomfortable seating of the old theatre and the strange smells of the building.

"I appreciated the kinds of films they showed, not always mainstream, sometimes more artful and thought provoking," English teacher Wiley Hunnicutt said. "I

certainly didn't like the theatre itself though, it was cramped and uncomfortable and it smelled of old popcorn, but that didn't keep me from going."

Ryan Burgess, a history teacher, said "The last time I went the furniture was very uncomfortable and you don't get the savings like you do at the Byrd... It costs the same as a theater with comfortable chairs so I'm okay with it closing... It's sad to see some of the neighborhood theaters go, but in this case it is not exactly a landmark worth saving, in my opinion."

Junior Jinks Jervey felt similarly to the teachers regarding the seating. He said, "Honestly, I think if they redid the seats inside they would get a lot more people there, it's a great theater, I like it, but the seats are really, really uncomfortable."

Despite its musky smells and uncomfortable seating, the loss of this relic of Richmond will be felt at Freeman. In the words of Freshman Morgan Canaan, "Any movie theatre closing is a tragedy."

# Imagine Dragons' "Smoke + Mirrors" Album Review

Shannon McCarthy  
A&E Editor

With their debut album, "Night Visions," Imagine Dragons rocked the music scene in 2012. In each consecutive year, the more airplay the band receive the more they stuck out from the crowd. Each single re-vamped their sound to make them one of the most versatile bands I have ever heard. To say I was excited for their follow-up, "Smoke and Mirrors," is an understatement. The following songs are a few of my favorites from their sophomore album.

**Polaroid: 8.5/10**

This song has all the makings of an epically underrated single: great hook, awesome lyrics, and catchy melody. Although it is a bit slow in tempo, the instrumentals provide a cornucopia of sounds for the ears to feast on. I personally am a fan of how the song puts lots of emphasis on the variety of instruments playing in the background—from the bass to the synthesizer. I'm also a sucker for harmonies; so the harmonizing throughout the cho-

rus and bridge sounds beautiful to me. I hope that this song will become more popular, because it deserves more attention than it is currently receiving.

**Trouble: 7.75/10**

Unlike much of the first half of the album, this song has a more light-hearted sound. Conversely, this song's subject matter is a bit darker than most of the other songs on "Smoke and Mirrors." From the first chords of the keyboard, I was hooked. Dan Reynolds' captivating vocals provide a stark contrast to lyrics such as "I looked a little lost at sea/I keep trying to find me," "I need redemption," and "Pray for me sister/Give me a mention/I got no faith." The sweet-sounding song leaves an eerie feeling by utilizing more of an acoustic sound than their other songs. It's a great song to listen to when you're in a more "folky" mood.

**I'm So Sorry: 8/10**

Easily my second favorite track on the album, "I'm So Sorry" combines classic riffs with modern alternative staples. I personally am a huge fan of classic rock, so the song fits in perfectly with my tastes. The amazing in-

strumentals are heart-pounding and teleports you to an epic rock concert circa 1985. The lyrics are simple enough to know after one listen, but the guitar riff is what people will remember the most. Who know Imagine Dragons had so many skills on the guitar?

**Friction: 6/10**

This song has a decent hook, but to me it just seems like an awkward mish-mash of musical styles. The best way I can describe it is that it's a mixture of island music and dubstep. Although the lyrics are fine, the overall musical styling was weak in my opinion. However, this song is the only one that left me with a sour taste in my mouth on the entire album.

**Overall: 7.5/10**

The overall album has a good mixture of musical styles. I, however, prefer "Night Visions" overall compared to "Smoke and Mirrors." I still would recommend buying this album, because it honestly is probably one of the best albums of 2015. Treat yourself to some musical delicious and give it a listen!



PHOTO: <http://www.wikipedia.org/>



FOUR  
STARS